

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2180

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 20959

LIMDIS

STATE FOR EUR-HARTMAN, PM-VEST AND AMBASSADOR RUSH

DOD FOR ISA-ELLSWORTH FROM THE CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR' NATO, DPC, MPOL, MILI, MCAP, FR

SUBJECT: ADVANCING STANDARDIZATION IN NATO

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REF: (A) STATE 176498; (B) PARIS 14231 (NOTAL); (C) PARIS 15544 (NOTAL); (D) PARIS 18849 (NOTAL); (E) PARIS 13545 (NOTAL); (F) BONN 12229 (NOTAL).

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FRENCH ARE LIKELY TO FIND SUBSTANTIAL AND PERHAPS INSURMOUNTABLE REASONS FOR NON-PARTICIPATION IN COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR ADVANCING STANDARDIZATION IN NATO. ON OTHER HAND, NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD NATO ADOPTED BY GISCARD REGIME, COUPLED WITH GISCARD'S MORE PRAGMATIC STYLE SUGGEST THAT CURRENT GOF OFFERS BEST CHANCE SINCE 1958 FOR COOPERATIVE APPROACH BY FRENCH WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM. DEGREE TO WHICH FRENCH MIGHT PLAY POSITIVE ROLE IN NATO PROGRAM OF STANDARDIZATION WILL DEPEND CRUCIALLY ON DECISIONS MADE AT HIGHEST LEVEL (GISCARD, CHIRAC, MOD BOURGES, AND SAUVAGNARGUES) CONCERNING PLUSES AND MINUSES FOR FRENCH INTERESTS WITHIN OVERALL FRAMEWORK OF NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM. WE RECOMMEND HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS WITH GOF LEADERS TO PRESENT OUR CASE, PERHAPS INCLUDING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PRESIDENTS FORD AND GISCARD. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S POSSIBLE VISIT TO PARIS IN LATE SEPTEMBER OFFERS EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS TYPE OF PRESENTATION. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND: WE WELCOME TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF PROGRAM FOR NATO STANDARDIZATION DESCRIBED IN REF A. IN PARTICULAR, WE AGREE WITH DELIBERATE PACE OF SCENARIO, WHICH SEEMS TO AVOID POSSIBLE "STEAM-ROLLER" INTERPRETATION. FROM PARIS PERSPECTIVE, ANY PROCEDURAL APPROACH THAT SMACKED OF "U.S. HIGH PRESSURE TACTICS" -- QUITE APART FROM ITS SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT -- WOULD BE SURE TO FEED FRENCH SUSPICIONS AND HOSTILITY.

3. WE START FROM ASSUMPTION THAT FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM IS WORTH CONSIDERABLE SPECIAL EFFORT BY U.S. FRANCE IS A MAJOR PRODUCER AND EXPORTER OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. ITS PARTICIPATION IN NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM WILL GO A LONG WAY TO MAKING IT WORK. CONVERSELY, THE ABSENCE OF FRANCE FROM THE PROGRAM WOULD AT BEST COMPLICATE ITS IMPLEMENTATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND AT WORST CRIPPLE IT.

4. FRENCH FEARS: GAULLIST THEOLOGY CONCERNING "INDEPENDENT" DEFENSE POLICY PEDDLED BY GOF FOR OVER 16 YEARS HAS REINFORCED A FRENCH MENTALITY TENDING TO EXAGGERATE THE DANGERS OF MULTILATERAL DEFENSE COOPERATION AND TO MINIMIZE OR EVEN IGNORE ITS ADVANTAGES. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE APPARENT THAN IN THE FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARD THE

SURVIVAL AND EXPANSION OF ITS ARMAMENT INDUSTRY. FIRST, FRANCE IS RELUCTANT TO BECOME DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN -- EVEN ALLIED -- ARMS SUPPLIES. IN THE PAST THE GOF HAS BEEN QUITE PREPARED TO USE THE SUPPLY OF FRENCH ARMS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES AS A LEVER TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL ENDS. IT IS CONVINCED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE PREPARED TO USE THIS SAME LEVER TO CIRCUMSCRIBE FRANCE'S "INDEPENDENT" POLICIES. SOME GOF OFFICIALS WOULD VIEW THE PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN REF A AS A GIMMICK DESIGNED PRECISELY TO IMPOSE THIS TYPE OF LEVERAGE ON FRANCE. SECOND, THE FRENCH LOOK ON NATO AS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A MECHANISM FOR U.S. EXPORTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 20959

LIMDIS

FRENCH POINT TO THE F-16 COMPETITION AS ONLY THE MOST
RECENT EXAMPLE OF HOW THE UNITED STATES USES ITS NATO
SECURITY GUARANTEE "TO BLACKMAIL" ITS ALLIES INTO
PURCHASING AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. SOME GOF OFFICIALS WILL
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SEE A PROGRAM OF NATO STANDARDIZATION AS NOTHING MORE
THAN AN INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THIS "BLACKMAIL." THIRD,
THE FRENCH RECALL THE U.S. EMPHASIS ON "BURDENSARING"
OVER PAST YEARS. SOME GOF OFFICIALS WILL SEE IN A NATO
PROGRAM OF STANDARDIZATION LITTLE MORE THAN A FIG LEAF
TO COVER A U.S. "BURDENSARING" EFFORT TO IMPROVE ITS
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION THROUGH THE SALE OF MILI-
TARY EQUIPMENT TO ITS NATO ALLIES. FOURTH, SOME GOF
OFFICIALS WILL SEE NATO STANDARDIZATION AS AN ATTEMPT BY
THE U.S. TO IMPOSE ITS "HEGEMONY" OVER ITS NATO ALLIES
WITH REGARD TO THIRD COUNTRY SALES. IN THIS REGARD,
MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN OUR DEALINGS WITH THE GOF IN CONNEC-
TION WITH ROLAND II HAVE FOSTERED THIS SUSPICION (REF B).
FIFTH, SOME GOF OFFICIALS WILL SEE NATO STANDARDIZATION
AS AN ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE ON FRANCE A FORCE POSTURE THAT
SERVES NATO'S STRATEGY OF "FLEXIBLE RESPONSE," AND
UNDERCUTS FRANCE'S DEFENSE STRATEGY. FINALLY, MANY IN
FRANCE WHO FEAR THAT GISCARD IS RE-INTEGRATING FRANCE
INTO NATO WOULD SEE FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN A NATO
STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM AS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT GISCARD
WAS SEEKING TO UNDO GAULLIST "INDEPENDENCE." QUITE
APART FROM THE SUBSTANTIVE MERITS OF THE CASE, THEREFORE,
DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS BEARING ON GISCARD'S
POLITICAL FATE MAY URGE A CONSERVATIVE FRENCH APPROACH
TO ANY NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM. THIS WOULD FOLLOW
LOGICALLY FROM THE EXPERIENCE DURING LAST SPRING'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON DEFENSE, WHEN THE GOF WAS
ATTACKED BY THE RIGHT AND LEFT FOR SECRETLY TRYING TO
REINTEGRATE FRANCE DE FACTO INTO NATO. AT THAT TIME,
THE GOF INSISTED THAT IT WAS ONLY CONTINUING POLICIES
OF EARLIER GAULLIST PRESIDENTS. HOWEVER, THE GOF'S
EXPLANATIONS WERE NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCING AND THE ISSUE
REMAINS A SENSITIVE ONE, BOTH IN PARLIAMENT AND WITH THE
PRESS. GISCARD'S NEED FOR PARLIAMENTARY VOTES ON ALL

ISSUES WILL BE FELT EVEN MORE URGENTLY THIS FALL WHEN HE PRESENTS HIS NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAM. THESE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ADD UP TO SUBSTANTIAL AND . PERHAPS INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES TO FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN A PROGRAM OF NATO STANDARDIZATION.

5. FRENCH HOPES: BUT THE PICTURE IS NOT TOTALLY BLEAK.
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AS WE NOTED IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF GISCARD'S DEFENSE POLICY AFTER ONE YEAR (REF C), GISCARD HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO DEAL WITH HIS ALLIES ON A MORE RELAXED AND PRAGMATIC BASIS, FREE FROM A PREOCCUPATION WITH "AMERICAN HEGEMONY." HE IS WILLING TO ACCEPT A MORE NORMAL AND VISIBLE RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO. WE CONCLUDED IN THAT ASSESSMENT THAT THE TIME IS RIPE FOR SERIOUS EXPLORATION -- BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL -- OF THE PARAMETERS OF COMMUNALITY AND COOPERATION THAT MAY BE OPEN TO US IN PARIS. A PROGRAM FOR NATO STANDARDIZATION IS PRECISELY THE TYPE OF SUBJECT THAT WE HAD IN MIND FOR SUCH "SERIOUS EXPLORATION" WITH THE GISCARD GOVERNMENT. PROBABLY MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE GOF, GISCARD'S EXPERTISE IN FINANCIAL AFFAIRS EQUIPS HIM TO UNDERSTAND THE ALARMING ECONOMIC WASTE THAT FLOWS FROM TODAY'S DUPLICATIVE AND POORLY COORDINATED ARMS PROGRAMS IN THE WEST. MOREOVER, THE FRENCH MILITARY BUDGET IS SUBJECT TO THE SAME COMPETITIVE PRESSURES FROM OTHER MINISTRIES THAT BESET THE DEFENSE BUDGETS OF ALL OTHER NATO COUNTRIES. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FRENCH ARE SEEKING WAYS TO RENDER THEIR DEFENSE BUDGET MORE COST EFFECTIVE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH MILITARY SERVICES SUPPORT GREATER STANDARDIZATION IN NATO. FOR EXAMPLE, FRENCH ARMY REPS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY WANT INCREASED STANDARDIZATION OF NATO AMMUNITION AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS. FURTHERMORE, ONE OF THE LESSONS THAT MORE OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS IN FRANCE HAVE CONCLUDED FROM THE F-16 COMPETITION IS THAT FRANCE IS NOT LIKELY TO DEFEAT THE U.S. IN HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION FOR ARMS SALES WITHIN THE NATO AREA. ONE OBVIOUS ANSWER TO THIS SITUATION IS A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM THAT WOULD OFFER THE FRENCH AN EQUITABLE "SLICE OF THE PIE." IF THE U.S. IS SINCERE ABOUT THE "TWO-WAY STREET" CONCEPT, AND CAN CONVINCE THE FRENCH THAT IT WILL BE DEFENDED AGAINST POSSIBLE CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER U.S. DOMESTIC PRESSURES TO "BUY AMERICAN," THE FRENCH MAY BE ATTRACTED TO A NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM AS THE BEST OF AN IMPERFECT SITUATION. FINALLY' IF NATO STANDARDIZATION CAN BE A VEHICLE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A JOINT EUROPEAN ARMA-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 20959

LIMDIS

MENT EFFORT, THUS SERVING THE GOAL OF EUROPEAN UNITY,
THE FRENCH MIGHT FIND THEIR PARTICIPATION ALMOST
UNAVOIDABLE. THAT WAS LABOULAYE'S MESSAGE TO ME
REPORTED IN REF D. WE BELIEVE GISCARD HAS SOME INTEREST
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IN THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN ARMS COOPERATION(REF E). AND WE ARE
ENCOURAGED BY VAN WELL'S JUDGMENT THAT THE SUBJECT OF
ARMS COOPERATION IS RIPE FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH
(REF F).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW WE GO ABOUT MINIMIZING THE
SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS DESCRIBED IN PARA 4 AND MAXIMIZING
THE OPPORTUNITIES DESCRIBED IN PARA 5 WILL BE CRUCIAL TO
FRANCE'S EVENTUAL DECISION CONCERNING NATO STANDARDIZA-
TION. ONE THING SEEMS CERTAIN: FRANCE'S FINAL DECISION
WILL BE BASED ON A BROAD SPECTRUM OF DOMESTIC AND
FOREIGN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS EXAMINED
AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. THE
BUREAUCRACY, OF COURSE, WILL PLAY A ROLE IN THIS DECISION,
BUT GISCARD HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE IS QUITE
PREPARED TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY -- EVEN IMPULSIVELY -- ON
DECISIONS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE SHOULD
FOCUS OUR EFFORT NOW AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE FRENCH
GOVERNMENT. WHILE WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO WEIGH
FROM PARIS ALL THE PROS AND CONS, THE DEPARTMENT MAY
WISH TO EXAMINE WHETHER PRESIDENT FORD SHOULD PUT THE
NATO STANDARDIZATION CASE DIRECTLY TO GISCARD IN PRIVATE
COMMUNICATION. THE MORE CANDID, DETAILED AND PERSONAL
THE COMMUNICATION, THE MORE IMPACT IT WOULD BE LIKELY
TO HAVE ON THE FRENCH DECISION. WE ARE PERSUADED THAT
GISCARD'S HIGH REGARD FOR PRESIDENT FORD PROVIDES US AN
OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE GISCARD ON THIS SUBJECT.
WHETHER OR NOT PRESIDENT FORD RAISES THE SUBJECT
WITH GISCARD, SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S POSSIBLE VISIT TO
PARIS IN THE FALL OFFERS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO
PRESENT PERSONALLY TO CHIRAC, BOURGES AND SAUVAGNARGUES
OUR VIEWS ON HOW NATO STANDARDIZATION CAN SERVE THE
MUTUAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTERESTS OF FRANCE, THE
UNITED STATES, AND NATO AS A WHOLE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT THE TIME IS RIPE FOR LOWER LEVEL "TECHNI-
CAL" DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH IN PARIS. SUCH
"TECHNICAL" DISCUSSIONS RISK FOCUSING FRENCH ATTENTION
ON THE NEGATIVE ELEMENTS MENTIONED IN PARA 4 ABOVE
BEFORE WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PERSUADE SENIOR FRENCH
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO THE POSITIVE SIDE OF NATO
STANDARDIZATION. FOR THIS REASON WE HAVE RECOMMENDED
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AGAINST VISITS TO PARIS BY MIDDLE-LEVEL USG OFFICIALS AND CONSULTANTS DEALING WITH NATO STANDARDIZATION. FOR THE TIME BEING, WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH "TECHNICAL" CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THE STRICTLY NATO ARENA (E.G., AT NATO HEADQUARTERS IN BRUSSELS). ONCE WE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT OUR CASE TO GISCARD AND THE OTHER SENIOR GOF LEADERS, AND IF WE SUCCEED IN SECURING THEIR INTEREST IN THE PROGRAM OF NATO STANDARDIZATION, WE WOULD WANT TO CONSIDER A CAREFULLY CONTROLLED PROGRAM OF BILATERAL "TECHNICAL" CONTACTS WITH THE GOF IN PARIS. WE WILL ALSO WANT TO DISCUSS BILATERALLY WITH KEY NATO ALLIES (E.G., FRG, UK, ITALY) THEIR VIEWS ON HOW FRANCE CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATO STANDARDIZATION.

7. WHILE WE CANNOT PROMISE THAT THIS SCENARIO WILL PRODUCE FULL FRENCH COOPERATION IN NATO STANDARDIZATION, WE BELIEVE THAT IT OFFERS US THE BEST CHANCE TO SECURE AS MUCH FRENCH COOPERATION AS THE TRAFFIC WILL BEAR. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT FAILURE TO ADOPT THE GENERAL LINE DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL DIMINISH CONSIDERABLY THE LIKELIHOOD OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN NATO STANDARDIZATION OVER THE LONG RUN.

8. THIS ANALYSIS HAS BEEN PREPARED IN THE ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR RUSH. HE MAY WISH TO ADD HIS PERSONAL VIEWS AT A LATER TIME.
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